ECE Highlights

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE No. 5 March 1990

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
COMMISSION ECONOMIQUE POUR L'EUROPE
ЕВРОПЕЙСКАЯ ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКАЯ КОМИССИЯ

ROAD SAFETY MEANS LIFE • LA SÉCURITÉ ROUTIÈRE, C'EST LA VIE
БЕЗОПАСНОСТЬ ДВИЖЕНИЯ-ЭТО ЖИЗНЬ

GREEN LIGHT FOR ROAD SAFETY CAMPAIGN IN THE ECE REGION

The Road Safety Campaign in the ECE region was officially launched at the 52nd session of the Inland Transport Committee, held from 29 January to 2 February 1990, with the adoption of a resolution establishing 1-7 October 1990 as the first "Road Safety Week in the ECE Region".

Transport safety, and in particular road traffic safety, is of priority concern for all Governments. Notwithstanding all measures currently taken, the number of accidents and the toll of social and economic costs as well as human loss and suffering continue to be unacceptably high. The decision to have a "Road Safety Week" in 1990 in the ECE region underlines the international dimension of this problem and the will of Governments to curb this plague with a joint effort.

The Campaign's goal

The main objective of the Campaign is to attain co-ordinated action for promoting greater awareness by road users and the public at large of the scale of the problem of road traffic accidents and the importance of measures and changes of behaviour that could reduce them.

Modalities

The theme and programme of the Campaign will be established by Governments in accordance with their own evaluation of the priorities in the field of road traffic safety. The all-European international character of the Campaign will be expressed by a common slogan and symbol.

In co-operation with international governmental and non-governmental organizations, UN/ECE will organize an exhibition at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, promote the widest possible publicity campaign and issue a sample brochure with the campaign symbol and slogan in the three ECE languages to be used by member countries. These actions will be accompanied before the start of the Road Safety Week by the completion of the revision and updating of the international instruments setting up European traffic rules. A common declaration in support of the objectives of the Road Safety Week is expected to be made by European transport ministers. A European Seminar on Road Traffic Safety will be organized as a follow-up to the Campaign.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Executive Body considers new action against transboundary air pollution

The Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution held its seventh session in Geneva from 21-23 November 1989.

In his opening statement, Gerald Hinteregger, expressed his hope that the "Sofia Protocol" concerning the control of emission of nitrogen oxides (NO_X) or their transboundary fluxes, would soon enter into force. It has been signed by 27 countries and ratified so far by eight. Recent annual surveys indicate that actual emission figures for nitrogen oxides are beginning to show stabilization, and, in some countries, even net reductions. The exchange of environmental technology, increasingly a key component of strengthening East-West co-operation, has become the subject of a study of a newly created ECE Task Force.

Work in specialized sectors such as air pollution abatement is increasingly seen not as an end in itself but part and parcel of the overall effort towards sustainable development. In 1990, a major review of national air pollution abatement policies in the ECE region will be undertaken.

New directions

The Executive Body decided to move ahead with the mapping of "critical loads" of air pollution throughout the ECE region on the basis of a uniform manual. The Working Group on Abatement Strategies was given an extended mandate to prepare proposals for additional action on sulphur dioxide pollution as a follow-up to the "Helsinki Protocol" of 1985 on a 30 per cent reduction. Preparations for a protocol on emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOC) are well under way in a working group.

Participants agreed on a voluntary cost-sharing scheme to continue the annual surveys of forest damage and air pollution in Europe. Two new co-ordinating centres on air pollution effects will be established in the Netherlands and the Soviet Union.

Recent foreign investment trends in the East European countries

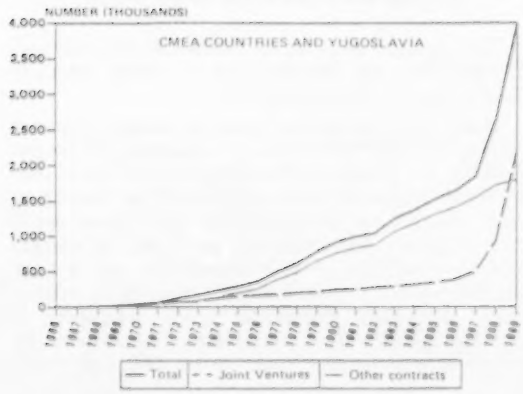
According to a UN/ECE statistical survey the total number of joint ventures in the CMEA countries and Yugoslavia is estimated to have reached 2,760 by October 1989, as compared with about 400 in January 1988, and approximately 100 in February 1987.

In Yugoslavia there were 670 registered investments in October of 1989. In the Soviet Union the total number of registrations was about 1,000, in Hungary about 600, in Poland about 400, in Czechoslovakia about 50, and in Bulgaria about 35. Romania has five joint ventures.

The aggregate foreign capital of the investments registered in the Soviet Union, Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia is estimated to have reached 2.2 billion US dollars on 15 October. The average foreign share in the statutory capital is between 41 and 45 per cent.

Western Europe's share in the total number of investments is 81-82 per cent in Hungary and Poland, 74 per cent in Czechoslovakia, and 64.5 per cent in the Soviet Union. About 8 per cent of the foreign investments in these four countries have foreign partners from other planned economies.

JOINT VENTURES AND OTHER CONTRACTS
GROWTH IN 1966-1989 (January-July)



Executive Secretary positively assesses the activities of the Committee on the Development of Trade

Gerald Hinteregger

Addressing the 38th session of the Committee on the Development of Trade, Mr. Gerald Hinteregger underlined its usefulness particularly in promoting East-West industrial co-operation and joint ventures.

The Executive Secretary referred to work undertaken by the Committee on questions such as leasing of industrial equipment; East-West trade in services, including tourism, which could result in an immediate potential for economic growth in the Eastern European countries. He noted progress made in the field of facilitation of international trade procedures where the UN/ECE had been in the vanguard of technical progress by launching and developing the electronic syntax known as UN/EDIFACT (Electronic data interchange for administration, customs and transport).

New undertakings

Mr. Hinteregger suggested a number of new fields of activities for the Committee, namely studies on the exchange of managerial experience; the convertibility of Eastern currencies; international investment guarantees and the role and functioning of special economic zones, as well as direct investment, including debt-for-equity swaps, to assist in the restructuring of Eastern economies without further debt creation.

Recalling that the first Executive Secretary of the UN/ECE, Gunnar Myrdal, had stated "the ECE represents an organized matrix for preserving and strengthening the links between countries on both sides of the divide, which must be preserved and strengthened if we want to build a sounder Europe and a peaceful world", Mr. Hinteregger suggested that the UN/ECE still represented such a matrix, but now that world which was twenty years ago a "future vision" was becoming a reality. The Committee on the Development of Trade, while continuing its valuable work in many technical fields, was urged to play an expanded role in making use of the unique opportunities offered by the favourable conditions taking shape in the region.

UN/ECE LECTURES

The concept of an "Open Economy" and new business mechanisms in the Soviet Union

At the invitation of the UN/ECE, Ivan D. Ivanov, Deputy Chairman of the Commission on External Economic Relations of the USSR Council of Ministers, spoke on "Economic Reform in the Soviet Union", on 27 November 1989.

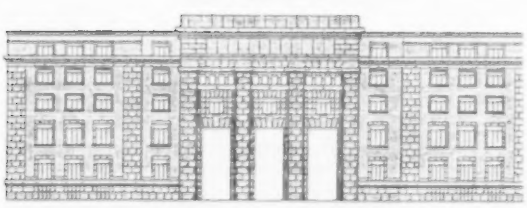
READER'S FICHE

towards greater openness. Foreign markets were expected to play a growing role in the economic and social development of the country. The Soviet technical, investment, financial and price-setting policies would be increasingly oriented outwards. Exports and imports would become alternatives for domestic investment and production on the basis of comparative advantage. New prices would take into account relevant world market prices and the rouble would be made fully convertible by the end of the century. A new set of trade policy instruments were being introduced specifically designed to meet international standards. They included: a new customs tariff; non-tariff regulations; a new customs declaration form identical to the scheme applied by the European Community; investment legislation; rules of competition and a new method of compiling statistics. Mr. Ivanov suggested that, together, these instruments are expected to facilitate the integration of the USSR into the international trading system.

ECE Energy Lectures: Natural gas market developments

On the occasion of the 36th session of the Committee on Gas, Mr. F. Gutmann, Chairman of the Board of Europe's largest distributor of natural gas "Gaz de France", spoke on "World and Regional Prospects of Natural Gas Market Developments". In addressing the role of natural gas in overall energy consumption he stressed that natural gas would become a major source of energy in the 21st century.

Both the economic and ecological aspects made it probable that the increasing energy consumption would be met by natural gas, particularly so in developing countries. Looking at certain difficulties which the gas industry may encounter in the future, special mention was made of the need for growing investment, transport and operating costs. Research was necessary on the optimization of investment costs and on ways of overcoming regional imbalances in natural gas supply and consumption. In this connection Mr. Gutmann drew attention to the development of international trade in liquefied natural gas to counter imbalances in natural gas reserves. He observed that as the development of gas became more complex, innovative and flexible approaches regarding transport and investment decisions would be critical for the future development of the industry.


THE ECE ENERGY SERIES
WORLD AND REGIONAL PROSPECTS OF NATURAL GAS MARKET DEVELOPMENTS
MR F. GUTMANN
Chairman of the Board, Gaz de France
WEDNESDAY 17 JANUARY 1990 10:00hrs
PALAIS DES NATIONS
SALLE VII

Off the Press

Impact of countertrade on small and medium-sized enterprises in Europe: survey results

A survey of small and medium-sized enterprises in the ECE region engaged in East-West trade was carried out in 1989 with the aim of determining problems encountered by these enterprises in their dealings with East European countries and to suggest possible ways of resolving them.

The results reveal that countertrade with East European countries increased significantly in the 1980s. Small and medium-sized enterprises with less than 100 workers accounted on the average for 31 per cent of their foreign turnover with East European countries, at the beginning of the decade, and 46 per cent in 1988. For those employing between 100 and 500 workers, the rates were 16 and 22 per cent. Czechoslovakia, the USSR and Hungary are the countries where small and medium-sized enterprises most frequently engaged in countertrade.

The complete results of the survey can be found in TRADE/R.548.

Recent foreign trade developments in the ECE region

The latest edition of the *Economic Bulletin for Europe* (vol. 41) concentrates on East-West trade and financial relations. In addition, it contains two special studies.

The first, on *Recent Developments in East-West Trade in Services*, assesses the overall importance of East-West trade in services and identifies its main components. The final section discusses some of the problems involved in expanding East-West trade in services. An important conclusion is that significant progress in the service sectors of the Soviet Union and the Eastern economies is unlikely to occur without a substantial increase in fixed investments.

The second study looks at *East-West Trade in Investment Goods* between 1970 and 1987, with emphasis on Eastern imports from the West. The nature of Eastern imports according to their technology level is examined, as well as their distribution by end-use sectors and type of goods. The study concludes that Eastern imports of Western investment goods failed to bring about the expected upgrading of Eastern exports to Western markets. However, the recent upsurge of Western interest in joint ventures demonstrates the possibilities offered by the restructuring programmes in those countries.

Economic Bulletin for Europe, vol. 41, ECE, TRADE (XXXVIII)/1 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.89.II.E.26), price $US 50.00.

The *Economic Bulletin for Europe* has been published regularly since 1948. Between 1981 and 1988, volumes 33 to 40 were issued for the United Nations by Pergamon Press. Starting with the current issue, publication is resumed by the United Nations. Henceforth the *Bulletin* will be issued once a year and will concentrate on the ECE region's international trade, with special emphasis on East-West relations.

WHERE TO ORDER

The publications listed with sales prices may be ordered from: **United Nations Bookshop, Sales Unit, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland** and a number of bookstores in the ECE region. Send cheque or money order in US dollars made payable to: UNITED NATIONS PUBLICATIONS.

Those publications listed without a sales price may be obtained from the Information Officer, Economic Commission for Europe, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland.

LOOKING AHEAD

ECE's contribution to the CSCE Conference on Economic Co-operation in Europe

Within the framework of the CSCE process, and pursuant to a decision taken at the Vienna Follow-up Meeting, a Conference on Economic Co-operation in Europe will be held in Bonn (Federal Republic of Germany) from 19 March to 11 April 1990. The participating States at the Vienna Meeting, recognizing the role of the ECE in fostering regional economic co-operation and in participating in the implementation of the relevant provisions of the Final Act and subsequent CSCE documents, invited the ECE to attend and make a contribution to the Bonn Conference. The ECE is submitting two contributions: a document on the Commission's recent activities of relevance to the Conference and a detailed brochure describing ECE's extensive collaboration with the business community entitled, *ECE and the Business Community: an extensive and mutually profitable co-operation.*

Symposium on the Use of Compressed Natural Gas and LPG as Fuel for Internal Combustion Engines

Kiev (Ukrainian SSR), 9-11 June 1991

This Symposium aims to familiarize ECE countries and other interested States and organizations with the prospects for the use of gas as vehicle fuel and the consequences for the world gas market and environmental protection. It will identify the regulatory, commercial, economic, technical and social factors that constitute obstacles to the further development of gas-fuelled transport and the improvement of gas and gas-diesel motors.

Seminar and study tour on forest site conservation and improvement for sustained yield

Messegelände (Trade Fair Centre), Munich, 26-30 June 1990

A seminar on forest site conservation and improvement for sustained yield will be held in Munich on the occasion of the 1990 INTERFORST Forestry Fair and Congress. It is being organized in conjunction with the eighteenth session of the Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee in collaboration with the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations (IUFRO), and will begin with a study tour on 26-27 June.

ECE CALENDAR, 1990

March

5-8	COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURAL PROBLEMS
5-9	Preparatory Committee for the Regional Conference on Environment and Development
6-16	Joint Meeting of the RID Safety Committee and the Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (*to be held in Berne, Switzerland*)
13-16	Working Party on Facilitation of International Trade Procedures
13-16	Working Party on the Construction of Vehicles
19-21	Meeting of Experts on the Development of a European Railway Network
20-23	Meeting on the Compendium of ECE Environment Statistics

April

2-6	Meeting of Directors of National Mining Research Institutes (*to be held in Ankara, Turkey*)
18-27	FORTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
30-4 May	Meeting of Experts on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce
30-4 May	Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (Special session)

May

7-11	Meeting of Government Officials Responsible for Standardization Policies
7-11	Meeting of Experts on Opencast Mines (*to be held in Belgrade, Yugoslavia*)
7-11	Seminar on the Technical and Economic Aspects of the Manufacture and Application of Coated Steel Products (*to be held in Genoa, Italy*)
14-16	Meeting of Experts on Problems of Planning and Operating Large Power Systems
14-18	Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods
14-18	Working Party on Combined Transport
14-18	Seminar on Integrated Statistical Information Systems and Related Matters (ISIS) (*to be held in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia*)
20-26	Study Tour on Production and Use of Fast-growing Species in Hungary (*to be held in Hungary*)
21-25	Seminar on Waste-water Management (*to be held in Munich, Federal Republic of Germany*)
28-1 June	SENIOR ECONOMIC ADVISERS TO ECE GOVERNMENTS
28-1 June	Working Party on Coal Trade and Coal Statistics (*to be held in Katowice, Poland*)

For further information, contact:
The Information Officer,
Economic Commission for Europe,
Palais des Nations,
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

Telephone: 734 60 11
Ext. 2893 or 2666
Telex: 28 96 96
Telefax: 734 98 25

ECE Highlights provides a round-up of news and information on major ECE events and publications and is available free of charge from the Information Officer.

Printed at United Nations, Geneva – GE.90-20218 – February 1990 – 3,000 – ISSN 1014-3866